



St. Peter's Health



**For immediate release**

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## **Mobile Crisis Response Team coming soon**

*Behavioral health specialist will respond alongside law enforcement once program is in place*

Helena – Lewis and Clark Public Health is partnering with St. Peter's Health (SPH) for a Mobile Crisis Response Team. The contract will go in front of the Board of County Commissioners for approval on August 27, 2020. St. Peter's Health will launch the program in September by starting to hire and train staff before activating the Mobile CRT vehicle for operation in our community.

Mobile CRT is part of an overarching strategy to improve the behavioral health systems across the continuum of care within the community. A Mobile Crisis Response Unit based out of SPH will include a behavioral health specialist responding alongside law enforcement to assess individuals in crisis for mental illness and substance use disorders. A mobile specialist and SPH-based Mobile CRU will offer crisis intervention, de-escalation, assessment and re-direction to community services, with the goal to reduce emergency room and detention center admissions to provide an individual centric response.

"100 community members on average visit our emergency department each month due to a behavioral health crisis. For many people, this is the safest place for them at that moment. Still, for others, it isn't, and we can best deliver the care they need in the field or the home with a behavioral health specialist on-site," said Inpatient Senior Nursing Director Kari Parmer, RN.

"St. Peter's Health is committed to growing its behavioral health team to meet the community's needs. We are excited to partner with the County on this program so that we can expand our efforts to deliver the right type of care, at the right time, and in the right place," according to St. Peter's Health CEO Wade Johnson.

Funding for the Mobile CRT comes from two grant sources totaling \$470,000. The contract between LCPH and SPH will run until June 30, 2021, and then be evaluated for renewal. Current funds will be used for start-up and core operation of a mobile crisis vehicle, staffing and Telepsych services.

"Over the past 20 years law enforcement has been the primary responders to individuals in mental health crisis. The number of calls of this type continue to increase, while resources have decreased," said Helena Chief of Police Steve Hagen. "Mobile CRT will put those in mental health crisis in contact with mental health professionals better equipped to help them through the crisis, returning officers to patrol duties. The Officers of the Helena Police Department are excited to work closely with the Mobile CRT to provide those in crisis immediate and long-term mental health services."

Lewis and Clark County Sheriff Leo Dutton adds, "We are excited to have trained mental health professionals who are able to respond with peace officer and provide appropriate care. Over the last 30 years, we have struggled to find a community wide base of support. This CRT is a result of cooperation and collaboration of people who care about behavioral health services. Behavioral health encompasses both mental illness and substance abuse disorders, which are prevalent in every community; it's how the community responds that make the difference. We are proud to be part of the team." ###